



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## BRIEFER COMMUNICATIONS.

---

### NEW ACADEMIC DEGREES AT PARIS.

Recent changes and proposals for reorganization in the French universities are of interest to American students who may be contemplating foreign study. The proposed changes are more general in character and shall be treated first, while changes in the study of political and social science in the Law Faculties which have been already effected will receive consideration at the close of this communication.

Some months ago, Professor Harry Furber, Jr., of Chicago, presented a concise memorial to the French Ministry of Public Instruction, which set forth that while the opportunities for study offered by the great schools of France and especially of Paris were in every sense excellent, the great majority of Americans who study abroad go to Germany rather than to France. To what can this strange avoidance of France be attributed? It is because Americans have had no real opportunity to test the merits of French scholarship. Innumerable obstacles stand in the way of their access to French schools, while the constant surveillance of compulsory examinations at frequent intervals, is troublesome in the extreme. The American who studies abroad is as a rule a specialist, a graduate of some home institution. Germany puts him upon practically the same footing with natives, giving him the degree of Doctor after the successful completion of his studies, and this is enough to turn the tide in Germany's favor. For the degree is a tangible mark of achievements and a valuable aid in the search for a position at home.

At any German university an American is admitted on the basis of a certificate from any college of recognized standing in the United States. He may then map out his own curriculum. As Professor Furber justly remarks, "the two functions of the university, that of providing facilities for education, and that of certifying to intellectual attainment by the granting of diplomas, are kept rigidly distinct. The student is free from examination except when he chooses to apply for a degree." The tendency, indeed, seems to be toward increasing laxity in the requirements for admission for foreigners and toward more strenuousness in the final examinations.

France, on the contrary, insists upon formalities which are highly embarrassing to the American who desires to study there. He has a

peculiar purpose and position to which the system affords no means of adaptation. The frequent compulsory examinations and rigid courses which serve the purposes of French professional training rarely accord with his pursuit of special study, nor can he always secure an adequate recognition of his previous training.

If France is desirous of drawing foreign students to her schools, the observations of Professor Furber are quite pertinent. They have led in fact to the formation of a *Comité Franco-Américain*, composed of some thirty leading French scientists, with the purpose of securing action in the matter. From the outset this committee seemed inclined to accede to all reasonable requests made by the Paris-American University Committee, consisting of resident Americans. The result of the joint deliberations of these committees has in some respects been exceedingly encouraging.

It has been proposed to create a new degree, whose exact designation is not yet settled—which would be particularly suited to the needs of American specialists. The degree would be conferred upon the student who had successfully pursued a sufficient number of cognate studies, without necessarily having confined himself to a single faculty or a single school. It would thus be possible, for instance, to receive the new degree upon the successful completion of courses and examinations in public law, philosophy of law, and political economy in the Law Faculty, and in modern philosophy and modern history in the Faculty of Letters.

The present limits of the various faculties and schools at Paris are the result of historical accident, on the one hand, and the necessities of professional schools, on the other. Thus the Law Faculty is practically a training school for young men who intend to enter the public legal service. Hence every candidate for a degree in law follows the prescribed curriculum, with little or no liberty in the choice of his subjects.

The *Comité* seems inclined to favor the recognition of work done in American colleges of acknowledged rank. It has proposed to consider the degree of Bachelor from such institutions the equivalent of the French *Bachelier*. There seems to be some misunderstanding here since this degree has a totally different significance, though the same name, in the two countries. The *Bachelier* is the first of the French degrees in time as well as rank, given in the first part of the student's college career, and followed later by *Licencié* and *Docteur*. The French "*Bachelier*" cannot be considered equal to our average "Bachelor."

The French naturally seek some guarantee that the advantages they propose to offer may be conceded only to such Americans as are

sufficiently advanced in their studies to profit by them. Such a guarantee it would be difficult to give while our universities are independent of one another both in purposes and methods; and while universities vary not only in general rank, but often exhibit unequal standing in the several schools or faculties of a single institution.

The decision of the problem involved in the choice of those American colleges which should be recognized, and the determination of the *extent* to which work at institutions thus favored might be taken into consideration by the French authorities as equivalent to work here were matters which had to be referred to competent American authorities. An American-Paris University Committee was therefore formed, with Professor Simon Newcomb, of Washington, at its head, and including a number of our most prominent university authorities. Attempts, too, are to be made to establish a number of scholarships for study in France—open to competition by students of colleges, recognized by the committee, at whose disposal they may be placed.

It is not impossible and might perhaps be advantageous if the work and opinions of this American Committee should acquire sufficient influence to induce our educational institutions to adapt their arrangements to whatever requirements the committee might see fit to make. Before we can successfully claim that respect on the part of foreign science, to which the past and present achievements of some of our colleges seem already entitled, there will have to be more uniformity and more certainty in our higher academic world.

If France is disposed to throw open the doors of her higher schools to Americans, and to make ability the sole criterion for academic honors and degrees conferred,—as seems to be the case,—we should insist upon an adequate recognition of studies successfully pursued in America by the student, and upon admission to all degrees in so far as they do confer no civil or professional privileges. While we might desire their degree of Doctor of Law, for instance, we are not entitled to ask the privilege of entering their public legal service, or of practicing law in France,—a right which now attaches to the law degree. The difficulty here involved might be obviated,—as I have been told has already been done in the case of some foreigners,—by conferring the degree *without* any such rights. It would then be reduced to what the foreigner generally seeks, a mark of scientific ability conferred by French scientists.

The proposed new degree will admit of new combinations of studies. There can be no doubt that this is a step forward. The limits of faculties are, as has been pointed out, historical accidents, or the result of the needs of strictly professional schools. The political and social sciences,—to cite perhaps the most important instance,—have

quite recently assumed such importance, and survived such alterations in their fundamental conceptions, that it has become impossible to confine them within the limits of existing "faculties" or "schools." In some places in Europe we find these subjects included in the law faculty; in others, they form part of the department of philosophy; in still others, a new faculty or a new school has been founded, like the Faculty of Political Sciences at Tübingen.

Changes affecting the status of the political sciences have already been made which are of considerable importance. They are grouped with the legal studies which, in my judgment, is preferable to associating them with the philosophical faculty. The status of these studies is now fixed by the *Décret* of April 30, 1895, which has gone into effect with the beginning of the term just commencing. Henceforth, as the *Décret* prescribes, the diplomas for "*Docteur en Droit*" will bear mention either of the "*sciences juridiques*," or of the "*sciences politiques et économiques*," according to the choice of the student in the arrangement of his studies. There are thus two more or less distinct courses of study, and two different systems of examination now open to the student in the law faculty. He may confine himself chiefly to the private legal disciplines, or to political science and economics. Moreover, the number of the examinations for the degree of Doctor of Laws has been reduced, and the order in which they are taken has become optional in the cases where political and economic sciences are chosen. The requirements now include two oral examinations instead of three, and the defence of a single thesis prepared by the candidate, instead of two.

The subjects required in examination of those students who seek their Doctor of Laws for work in political and economic sciences, are as follows :

For the first examination :

1. History of French Public Law.  
Principles of Public Law.  
Comparative Constitutional Law.
2. Administrative Law, or  
Public International Law, according to the choice of the candidate.

For the second examination :

1. Political Economy and the History of Economic Doctrines.
2. French Financial Legislation and the Science of Finance.
3. At the option of the candidate :  
Industrial Legislation and Economy, or  
Rural Legislation and Economy, or  
Colonial Legislation and Economy.

The thesis must appertain to one of the subjects mentioned.

The above enumeration may convey a partial, but by no means adequate, idea of the seriousness with which political sciences are now studied in French universities. Some years ago, instruction in political and social science at Paris was neither very advanced nor very extensive,—outside, perhaps, of the *École Libre des Sciences Politiques*, founded in 1877. In the last few years, however, these sciences have occupied an increasingly large part in the instruction offered in the *Collège de France*, and also in the Faculty of Law of the University of Paris.

The objection, which but a few years ago might have been made with a certain degree of justice, that Paris offers the student next to nothing in the way of advanced work in economic or political sciences can now no longer be brought forward.

C. W. A. VEDITZ.

*Paris.*